

| Control Yourself through Ignoring Yourself

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to look back at the end of the day and realize **most of what you did wasn't actually what you were meant to do?**

You might start your morning with **good intentions**, planning to tackle a project, cut back on snacking, or maybe finally get around to that workout... but somehow, **hours disappear into random distractions.**

This is something I see all the time. There's this gap between what we want to do and what we actually end up doing.

And a lot of people beat themselves up over it, they think they're lazy, they think there's something wrong with them, or they think, "If I just had more willpower, I could fix this."

The solution isn't about trying harder, or being more disciplined, or even getting more motivated.

The real skill is learning how to ignore yourself.

The real skill is seeing that not every thought or urge you have actually deserves a response.

If you can learn to step back and not obey every little craving or impulse, everything gets easier.

This is what people who **overcome addiction** end up learning, but it's just as true for anyone **trying to break a bad habit, get in shape, or simply be more consistent in life.**

The reality is, most of us are **experts at listening to ourselves but we're just listening to the wrong parts.** Every time a craving or an urge pops up, we treat it like an order.

But what if you could just watch that urge, let it pass, and not act on it?

That's the foundation of real self-control. It's **not about willpower;** it's about **non-reaction.**

And once you see that, you can start to build the kind of discipline that actually lasts.

So, let's dig into **what actually happens when you try to ignore those urges.**

Because a lot of people hear this and think, "Okay, if I just sit there and do nothing, isn't that just... suffering in silence? Isn't that going to make me miserable or just crank up my anxiety until I give in anyway?"

But there's what's interesting. If you actually watch what happens to your cravings or uncomfortable emotions when you don't act on them, you'll notice something really surprising: **they go away.**

Not instantly, not always painlessly, but they don't actually last forever.

We have unconsciously taught ourselves that the moment we feel anything uncomfortable, we need to do something about it.

We have learned that TikTok treats boredom, pornography treats sadness and snacking treats anxiety.

But what nobody tells you is that **these feelings are kind of like the weather**, they show up, they can be intense, **but if you just let them be**, they pass and eventually disappear.

All feelings have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The problem is, most of us never give them a chance to reach that end, because the second the discomfort shows up, we're already reaching for an external solution.

Imagine you're sitting at home and you get the urge to eat junk food, even though you're not hungry.

If you just sit with it, pay attention, and don't immediately order take-away, you'll notice that the urge gets stronger

for a bit, and then, almost out of nowhere, it starts to fade.

This is literally how your brain works; it's called **returning to baseline**.

Emotions and impulses are temporary by design.

But if you act on every urge, you're basically training your mind to keep throwing them at you. Your brain learns, "Every time I feel a craving, I get what I want."

And that's why it feels so relentless.

The truth is, if you can **practice just letting these feelings rise and fall**, you start to **take the power away from them**. You build real freedom, not by fighting your emotions, but by letting them move through you.

Now, at this point, some of you might be thinking, "Alright, so if I can just let urges pass, does that mean all I have to do is sitting on my hands and wait for everything to get better?"

Not exactly. See, this is where most people **hit a wall** with self-control, they think it's all about either acting or not acting. But self-control is actually made up of two totally different skills.

The first is what we just talked about: being able to not react. That's the ability to notice an impulse and just let it be, instead of jumping to do something about it.

But there's a second part that people almost always forget, and this is where lasting change actually comes from.

It's the ability to make a conscious choice about what you do next, to act with intention, instead of just doing nothing or failing into whatever's easiest.

Say you're trying to eat healthier. You get that familiar urge for fast food, but this time, **instead of ordering food, you pause.**

You feel the craving, you watch it rise and fall, and eventually, you realize it's not as overwhelming as it seemed.

Say you're trying to stop watching porn. You get that familiar urge but this time, instead of opening your internet browser, **you pause.**

You feel the craving, you watch it rise and fall, and eventually, you realize it's not as overwhelming as it seemed.

But now you're left with this gap, **what do you actually do instead?** This is where most people stumble.

They think resisting the urge is the whole battle, and then they end up right back where they started because **they never actually decided on a different action.**

So here's the key insight: **real self-control isn't just about stopping yourself from doing the wrong thing.** It's also about **giving yourself a chance to choose something better.**

It might sound basic, but when you separate these two steps,

- first, ignoring the impulse
- second, consciously choosing what to do next, you make it way easier for your brain to build a new habit.

The more you practice these steps separately, the more progress you make. **If you just try to will yourself into good behavior, you burn out.**

But if you **practice resisting**, and then practice making **one clear, intentional choice**, even something small, **you create a pathway for real change.**

You will start to see that every moment of self-control is actually a moment of freedom: first from your **impulses**, and then in what you choose to do with that freedom.

And that, honestly, is where most transformation actually happens, **in learning to pause, and then choosing on purpose what comes next.**

So now that you've got those two pieces, there's one more layer I'd like to add, and it's actually **looking at the price**

you pay when you follow every urge that pops into your head.

See, most of us go through life in a kind of autopilot mode. Something comes up, a craving, a little itch for distraction, a flash of frustration, and we just respond. We rarely pause to ask, "If I do this, what am I really giving up?"

And that's a huge blind spot, because every impulse you act on has a cost, whether it's obvious or not.

Let me give you an example. Let's say you have a habit of getting into arguments on the internet. In the moment, when you argue with someone, it feels like you're getting some kind of relief or satisfaction, but what do you really end up with?

Usually, it's frustration, wasted time, maybe even more stress than you started with.

If you actually step back and tally up how much energy and peace of mind you're sacrificing for a little burst of impulse, it's almost never worth it.

This applies to so many areas, overeating, doom-scrolling, even just saying "yes" to things you don't really want to do. Every time you obey that initial urge, you're trading something away.

Sometimes it's your focus, sometimes it's your mood, sometimes it's your long-term goals. But because we never pause to look at the full bill, we keep paying it over and over.

Here's the thing: **when you start to reflect on where your impulses lead, you build a different kind of awareness.**

It's not just about resisting or choosing, it's about actually seeing the consequences of your actions, and letting that inform what you do next.

The more you **pay attention to the real cost of following every impulse**, the easier it becomes to let them go.

You realize that most of those urges **aren't just unhelpful, they're expensive.** And **when you see the price, it gets a lot easier to walk away.**

That's the shift. Instead of living on autopilot, you're starting to act with real awareness.

You're not just saying "No" to the impulse; you're saying "Yes" to your own priorities, your own peace of mind, your own growth. And that's what gives you momentum to actually change, not just for a day, but for good.

At this point, you might be wondering, "Okay, I get it, but how do I actually build this skill? How do I practice **not**

reacting when my mind and body feel like they're screaming at me to do something?"

And this is where a lot of people trip up, because they assume you either have self-control or you don't.

But the reality is, it's a skill like any other, you get better at it by practicing **in low-stakes situations**, so that you're ready for the bigger ones when they come up.

Let's start with something simple: say you're sitting at your desk and suddenly get the urge to check your phone. Instead of immediately reaching for it, **just pause.**

Don't force yourself to focus on work or do anything in particular, just notice the urge.

Pay attention to how it feels. Maybe it gets stronger, maybe it even feels uncomfortable for a bit.

But if you wait, even for thirty seconds, you'll notice it fades. And this right there, that's your first rep. **The more reps you do throughout the day, the easier it gets.**

You can apply this to so many tiny moments throughout your day.

- It's about noticing the urge,
- letting it rise,
- and then letting it fall without acting on it.

Each time you do this, you're literally building new neural pathways.

As I explained, these little reps add up, and soon you'll find that what felt impossible before, sitting with discomfort, letting urges pass, becomes a lot more natural.

The key here is to **start small**. You **don't have to conquer every bad habit overnight**. But the more you practice ignoring those little impulses, the stronger you get at handling the big ones.

And what's amazing is, you'll start to notice you have more bandwidth, more clarity, and way more freedom in your choices because you've learned that you don't have to answer every call your mind throws at you.

I'd like to emphasize that **having self-control especially in the world we live in now is more than essential**.

Think about how modern life is structured. **You're surrounded by apps and foods and ads and devices, all designed to trigger your impulses over and over again.**

Every notification, every little red dot, every flavors are engineered to make you crave more, these things are everywhere.

You might start your day with good intentions, but you're fighting a system that profits every time you react without thinking.

So it's not just about your personal weakness, or some character flaw. The reality is, **the world is engineered to make ignoring your impulses as hard as possible.**

But here's the good news: the more you practice, the more you start to see the game for what it is. You realize, "Wait, I don't have to answer every notification. I don't have to follow every craving."

And the power this gives you goes way beyond just breaking a habit. You get back your attention, your time, your sense of choice. Life starts to feel less reactive and more intentional.

What happens to anyone who trains themselves to pause before reacting, is that everything starts to change. They feel calmer, less scattered. They **stop losing hours to mindless scrolling or eating or arguing.**

Their relationships improve, because they're not so quick to snap or withdraw or escape into distraction. Even things like anxiety and stress start to lose their grip, because now you know you can sit with discomfort and let it pass.

And this is really what I want you to take away: **the point isn't to become some kind of emotionless robot, or to**

deny yourself all pleasure. The point is to put yourself back in the driver's seat of your own life.

When you master the art of ignoring yourself, of letting thoughts and urges pass without having to chase them, you unlock a level of agency that most people never experience.

So next time you feel pulled by an impulse, remember: **you don't have to answer it.**

Practice that pause, let it float by, and notice how much lighter everything starts to feel. That's the beginning of real freedom, and it's a skill you can build, starting right now.